



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

April 17, 2020

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
United States Senate
512 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Wicker:

Thank you for your letter regarding my proposal to establish a 5G Fund for Rural America and the importance of collecting more accurate broadband deployment data. Closing the digital divide has been and remains my top priority. I've seen for myself what affordable high-speed Internet access can do for a community—for its families, its schools, its hospitals, its farms, its businesses—as well as the impact of its absence.

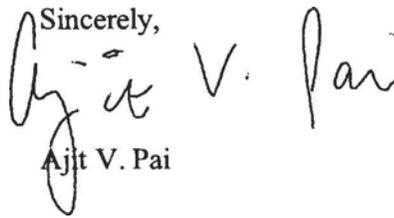
The Commission has worked over the past several years to improve its mobile broadband data collection processes. As your letter notes, the Commission decided not to move forward with Phase II of the agency's Mobility Fund following staff's analysis of data submitted in response to the one-time data collection and challenge process for MF-II. Last August, the Commission adopted the Digital Opportunity Data Collection Report and Order. The accompanying Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking proposed expanding the Digital Opportunity Data Collection to cover mobile broadband providers to ensure that their maps are accurate and updated in order to reflect changes in mobile broadband technology. The Commission outlined a number of proposals intended to improve our wireless mapping efforts, including standardizing technical parameters for mapping 4G LTE availability, accepting crowdsourced data from third parties, supplementing provider-submitted maps with on-the-ground and drive test data, strengthening the Commission's data verification practices, and reforming the collection of mobile voice and broadband subscription data.

I commend you for your leadership that led to the enactment of S. 1822, the Broadband Deployment Accuracy and Technological Availability Act (Broadband DATA Act), which largely ratifies the Commission's adopted and proposed actions in the Digital Opportunity Data Collection rulemaking. Indeed, the Commission recommended the President sign this critical piece of legislation into law. The Commission's continued work to implement the directives set forth in this recently enacted law will undoubtedly result in more accurate coverage data and maps. In order for this legislation to live up to its full potential, it remains critical that Congress appropriate the necessary funding for the Commission to implement the requirements of the Broadband DATA Act. I look forward to working with you and Congress in general to fund this broadband mapping initiative.

As you note, I announced plans in December 2019 to establish the 5G Fund—a program that would make up to \$9 billion in Universal Service Fund support available to carriers to deploy 5G mobile wireless services in rural America. The 5G Fund also would set aside at least \$1 billion specifically for deployments facilitating precision agriculture needs. In order to move forward with establishing the 5G Fund, I recently circulated a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for the consideration and vote by my fellow Commissioners at our upcoming Open Meeting on April 23. In the draft NPRM, we seek comment on two options for identifying areas that would be eligible for 5G Fund support. Under one approach for Phase I, the Commission would hold an auction in 2021 by defining eligible areas based on current data sources that identify areas as particularly rural and thus in the greatest need of universal service support. In recognition of the challenges of ensuring that 5G service is deployed to areas that lack any mobile broadband service, the proposal would prioritize areas that have historically lacked 4G LTE or 3G service. The second approach would delay the 5G Fund Phase I auction until at least 2023, after collecting and processing improved mobile broadband coverage data through the Commission’s new Digital Opportunity Data Collection.

Thank you for your commitment to rural broadband and American leadership in 5G. I look forward to continuing to work with you as the Commission implements the Broadband DATA Act and establishes future proceedings to expand access to next generation wireless networks, identify gaps in broadband coverage across the nation, and direct universal service support to areas that need it the most.

Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

April 17, 2020

The Honorable John Thune
Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, and the Internet
United States Senate
512 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Thune:

Thank you for your letter regarding my proposal to establish a 5G Fund for Rural America and the importance of collecting more accurate broadband deployment data. Closing the digital divide has been and remains my top priority. I've seen for myself what affordable high-speed Internet access can do for a community—for its families, its schools, its hospitals, its farms, its businesses—as well as the impact of its absence.

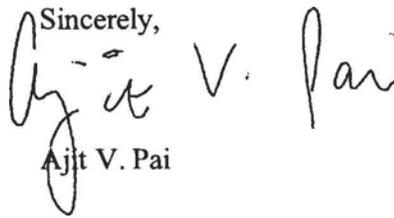
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Sincerely,

Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

April 17, 2020

The Honorable Roy Blunt
United States Senate
260 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Blunt:

Thank you for your letter regarding my proposal to establish a 5G Fund for Rural America and the importance of collecting more accurate broadband deployment data. Closing the digital divide has been and remains my top priority. I've seen for myself what affordable high-speed Internet access can do for a community—for its families, its schools, its hospitals, its farms, its businesses—as well as the impact of its absence.

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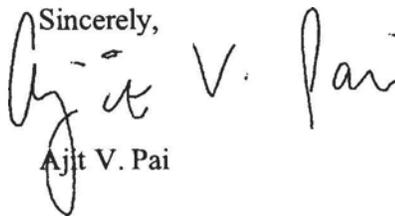
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Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

April 17, 2020

The Honorable Deb Fischer
United States Senate
454 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Fischer:

Thank you for your letter regarding my proposal to establish a 5G Fund for Rural America and the importance of collecting more accurate broadband deployment data. Closing the digital divide has been and remains my top priority. I've seen for myself what affordable high-speed Internet access can do for a community—for its families, its schools, its hospitals, its farms, its businesses—as well as the impact of its absence.

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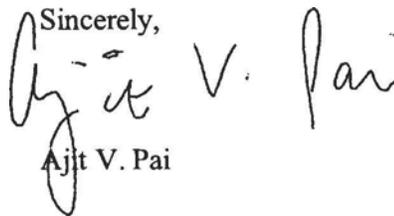
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Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

April 17, 2020

The Honorable Jerry Moran
United States Senate
521 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Moran:

Thank you for your letter regarding my proposal to establish a 5G Fund for Rural America and the importance of collecting more accurate broadband deployment data. Closing the digital divide has been and remains my top priority. I've seen for myself what affordable high-speed Internet access can do for a community—for its families, its schools, its hospitals, its farms, its businesses—as well as the impact of its absence.

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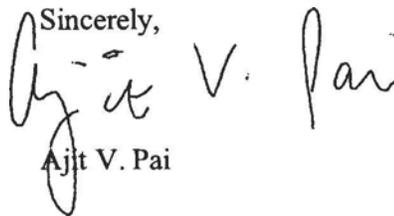
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Sincerely,

Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

April 17, 2020

The Honorable Ron Johnson
United States Senate
328 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Johnson:

Thank you for your letter regarding my proposal to establish a 5G Fund for Rural America and the importance of collecting more accurate broadband deployment data. Closing the digital divide has been and remains my top priority. I've seen for myself what affordable high-speed Internet access can do for a community—for its families, its schools, its hospitals, its farms, its businesses—as well as the impact of its absence.

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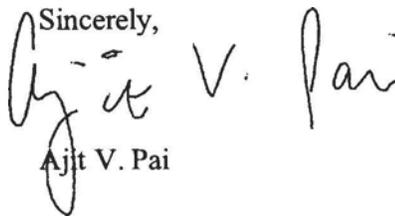
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Sincerely,

Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

April 17, 2020

The Honorable Marsha Blackburn
United States Senate
B40B Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Blackburn:

Thank you for your letter regarding my proposal to establish a 5G Fund for Rural America and the importance of collecting more accurate broadband deployment data. Closing the digital divide has been and remains my top priority. I've seen for myself what affordable high-speed Internet access can do for a community—for its families, its schools, its hospitals, its farms, its businesses—as well as the impact of its absence.

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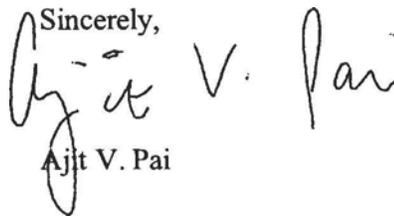
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Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

April 17, 2020

The Honorable Todd Young
United States Senate
400 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Young:

Thank you for your letter regarding my proposal to establish a 5G Fund for Rural America and the importance of collecting more accurate broadband deployment data. Closing the digital divide has been and remains my top priority. I've seen for myself what affordable high-speed Internet access can do for a community—for its families, its schools, its hospitals, its farms, its businesses—as well as the impact of its absence.

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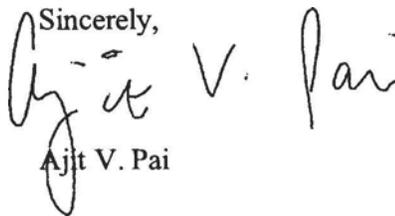
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